In the claims:

All of the claims standing for examination are presented below.

1-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously presented) A method for word synchronization between a plurality of word devices connected by a plurality of serial lines, comprising the steps of:

requesting synchronization from a first device to a second device when the first device does not have synchronization;

receiving a request for synchronization at a first device from a second device, the first device then becoming synchronized;

transmitting data from a first device to a second device, the first device being synchronized, the first device having received from the second device a synchronization signal indicating that the second device is synchronized.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein, in the step of transmitting data, the synchronization signal includes at least one of a synchronization request from the synchronized second device and a start-of-packet indicator from data transmitted by the second device.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising: becoming unsynchronized one or more of the plurality of word devices in response to receiving a loss-of-synch signal.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the loss-of-synch signal is generated by a deserializer included in the device.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising:

detecting a bad control word at a first device from a second device; and

requesting synchronization from a first device to a second device, the first device having received a bad control word from the second device.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein

the word devices include serializers and deserializers that satisfy a SERDES specification for control characters,

a bad control word received by a device is inconsistent across deserializers of the device.

23-30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently amended) A method for detecting and adapting to a loss of word synchronization at a first word device, the first word device being synchronized and connected to a second word device by a plurality of serial lines, the method comprising: becoming unsynchronized at the first device in response to ~~serially~~ receiving a threshold number of bad control words from the serial lines connected to the second device, except for a single condition that [[all]] any bad control ~~words~~ word received in the threshold number ~~are separated~~ either immediately precedes or immediately follows a synchronized data packet.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the threshold number of bad control words is one.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein the threshold number of bad control words is greater than one.

34. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein

the first word device and the second word device each include a plurality of serializers and deserializers;

the serial lines connect the serializers of the first word device to the deserializers of the second word device and the serializers of the second word device to the deserializers of the first word device; and

the serializers and the deserializers of the first and second devices satisfy a SERDES specification for control characters.

35. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein the threshold number of bad control words is one.

36. (Original) The method of claim 34, wherein the threshold number of bad control words is greater than one.

37-41. (Cancelled)